DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 816 CE 045 334

TITLE Presenting Cooperative Education. A Guide for Providing Information about Cooperative Education and Recruiting Work Stations.

INSTITUTION National Child Labor Committee, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY Atlantic Richfield Foundation, Los Angeles, CA.; Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, New York, N.Y.; Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.; Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, Mich.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 47p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cooperative Education; Cooperative Programs; *Information Dissemination; *Instructor Coordinators; Job Development; Meetings; *Motivation Techniques; Persuasive Discourse; Public Relations; *Recruitment; *School Business Relationship; School Community Relationship; Secondary Education; Student Placement; Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

This manual is intended to assist teacher-coordinators in presenting the cooperative education story and recruiting appropriate work stations for cooperative education students. It consists of three sections. Discussed in the first section are such techniques for presenting cooperative education to the community of employers as stage setting and advance fanfare. The second section (1) provides ideas for presenting the cooperative education story to employer groups in the public and private sectors in order to build their support of and commitment to participation in cooperative education, (2) discusses how to build on the foundation of good will and interest developed by the activities covered in the first section, and (3) provides ideas on using a presentation to a group of potential employers as a way of making contacts leading to presentations to individual employers. Covered in the final section are techniques for presenting information about the benefits of cooperative education to individual employers in a manner that incorporates techniques for obtaining specific job commitments. Suggestions on the who, what, and how for such a meeting are included. (MN)

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# Presenting Cooperative Education

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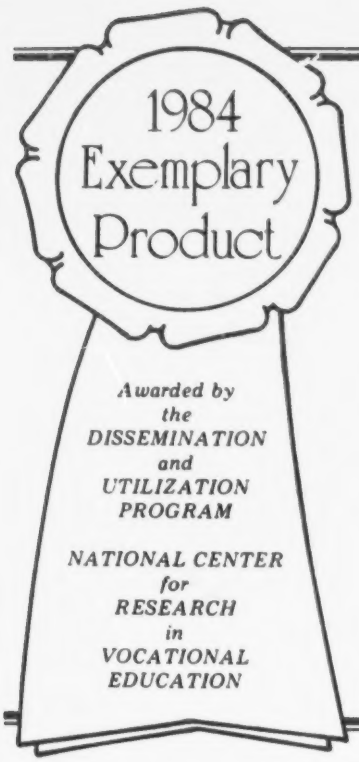


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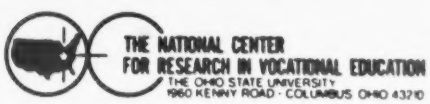
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# Presenting Cooperative Education

A guide for providing information about
cooperative education and recuriting work stations

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Funding for this project has been provided by the Ford, Charles S. Mott, Edna McConnell Clark and Atlantic Richfield Foundations.

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this manual is to assist teacher/coordinators to present the cooperative education story and to recruit appropriate work stations for their students.

Some employers may be familiar with cooperative education and be favorably disposed to it. But, most people are not informed and are not aware of the benefits to student, school, employer, and the community. While some jobs for students are in the school system, governmental agencies and non-profit organizations, most cooperative education employment is in private-sector companies. It is there that jobs must be found.

This manual has three sections.

The first section deals with presenting cooperative education to the community of employers in general to develop interest and a generally favorable disposition. It focuses on stage setting and advance fanfare. Its purposes are to persuade employers to listen to you -- to become your audience and to motivate them to be receptive to the message in your presentation -- to be a responsive, friendly audience.

The second section provides ideas for presenting the cooperative education story to employer groups in the public and private sectors to gain their support and commitment to participate. Private sector groups include Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and local trade associations. Professional associations, general public employee associations, and political organizations can provide access to public sector employers. An effective presentation to such groups can create positive feelings for cooperative education, leads for jobs, offers for assistance, and invitations to discuss possible placements. This section discusses how to build on the foundation of good will and interest developed by the activities covered in Section One. It provides ideas on how to use the opportunity for a more direct delivery of the message to a group of potential employers and to make contacts to lead to presentations to individual employers.

Section three is concerned with techniques for presenting the cooperative education story to individual employers. The goal is to help you develop a presentation which will lead to specific job commitments. It contains suggestions on the who, what, and how for a meeting to obtain a commitment from an employer.

There are a number of preparatory steps common to all types of presentations. The most important among these are:

1. To determine how you want to deliver your message. A most persuasive role to project is as a professional educator: an expert in preparing secondary students for employment upon graduation, using an educational approach which links and integrates learning in school with work, and tailors in-school education to meet employers' needs.

2. To be able to explain the theory and practice of cooperative education, what is expected from students, employers, and the educational system, and the benefits for each of these and for the community as a whole. It will assist you in focusing on advantages and responsibilities for each group, enlightened self-interest and reciprocity between employers and educational systems.

3. To communicate clearly and with confidence, and to be able to respond readily to questions which will be asked.

In every presentation -- community, business groups, individual employers -- decide on the relationship you want to establish with the people to whom you communicate. For starters, the relationship should provide reciprocal

benefits and mutual participation, e.g., the employers having a role in classroom learning and the teacher/coordinator having a role in work site experience and training. You should be sure of the relationship in each activity described in your presentation.

Recognize that most employers do not believe that secondary school graduates can perform entry-level jobs satisfactorily. Invite them to indicate their specific dissatisfactions and to participate in efforts to improve the situation through cooperative education.

## PRESENTING COOPERATIVE EDUCATION TO EMPLOYERS IN GENERAL

While our primary concern in this manual is to motivate employers to participate in cooperative education, you cannot overlook other audiences. For example, a presentation for employers might alienate educators.

General public relations releases and news stories carried by local newspapers and radio stations are important for developing good will and sensitizing people about cooperative education. However, only in a few cases are they sufficiently focused to produce participation by employers.

To attract the attention and interest of employers, some careful planning is needed. In your planning you should:

a. Identify with some precision the audience of employers that you want to interest.

b. Decide on the opinions and feelings that you want this audience to have with respect to cooperative education. In general terms this usually is: "Cooperative education could be a beneficial activity for my company and it may be in our interest to support and participate in it."

c. Determine what information about cooperative education would help produce this climate for your target population.

d. Evaluate the effectiveness and cost of the various channels available for getting the information to employers. Some channels are newspapers of general distribution, trade organization newsletters, radio (ads and interviews), direct mail, and television.

e. Collect information and stories for use in speeches, individual presentations, news releases, etc., that present cooperative education in a favorable light to attract employers. Again, though, make your selections with an eye to their possible effect on other audiences.

f. Distribute the information through the most effective channels. It is important to remember that the key to getting good distribution is convincing the people who control access to the channels of communication of the importance and desirability of supporting cooperative education.

g. Get feedback on the effectiveness of your efforts so that both content and distribution can be improved. Remember that you are concerned primarily with the impact on a defined population of employers.

Information and stories illustrating the following have been useful:

- the cost/benefit ratio of cooperative education for employers.
- how the local labor pool is enriched.
- the extent to which participation in cooperative education eases the transition from school to work for high school graduates -- particularly for students who are disadvantaged.
- the cost/benefit ratio for the community at large by reducing youth unemployment, capital investment for vocational education, etc.
- how specific employers were able to hire qualified secondary school graduates as a result of participating in cooperative education.

- the reduction in school dropout rate for cooperative education students compared to other students.

- improved relations between students and local businesses.

- giving employers greater insight into the potential of the local labor market and how to help the educational system prepare students to achieve this potential.

Some formats used by teacher/coordinators are:

- success stories -- students whose employment was continued after graduation, longitudinal follow-up on job promotions, employers whose needs were met, employers who changed their opinion of young workers and their ways of supervising and training them, etc.

- employer recognition by students, by the educational system, by the community for participation in the program.

- employer participation and support in improving vocational education by suggesting curriculum changes, helping teachers update their skills, providing materials and equipment, supplying specialized instruction, etc.

- an annual report on the results of the business and education partnership in cooperative education to be sent to your entire target population. (On the following page is an outline of one such report.)

- stress how employer input led to changes in the curriculum and educational processes.

(Example: Cover Page)

Business and Education

Partners in Cooperative Education
Annual Report 1983

Advisory Committee for Cooperative Education
Greattown School District

( Sample Outline:
Inside Pages)

1. Objectives of Cooperative Education

   - for students
   - for employers
   - for educational system
   - for community

   How are these achieved

   - during pre-employment education
   - during employment coordinated with education
   - post-graduation employment

2. The Roles of Participants: what each is doing to advance cooperative education.

   - school staff
   - employers
   - students
   - community leaders
   - advisory committee members

3. Participants' Names: employers, students, advisory committee members, community leaders, coordinator.

4. Success: descriptions by employers, students, and school and how they feel about cooperative education.

5. Supporting Cooperative Education: activities of students, employers, and others to enrich and improve school-employer linkage and cooperative education; case studies.

6. Results:
   - graduation rate
   - continued employment after graduation
   - continuation of education

7. How to Get More Information: tear sheets with teacher/coordinator's name, address, and phone number, with space for describing information requested.

## PRESENTING COOPERATIVE EDUCATION TO GROUPS

It is not difficult to get invitations to present the cooperative education story to organizations. Most groups are on the lookout for speakers and "agenda fillers." However, to be most efficient it is desirable to plan and execute a well-thought out campaign. There is not much benefit in spending time talking to a group of people who cannot provide jobs or influence others to provide jobs or help your program in some concrete way. Your local Private Industry Council, if there is one, may be willing to provide helpful advice. Steps in such a campaign include:

1. Identify organizations which have among their members a large number of employers or persons influential with employers. Types of organizations to consider are:

   a. General business-oriented groups, e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce.

   b. Trade associations, e.g., florists, dry cleaners, grocers.

   c. Local chapters of professional organizations, e.g., American Society for Personnel Management, American Society for Training and Development.

   d. Civic associations with heavy employer membership.

2. Determine your priorities for seeking to interest these organizations. Some factors to consider are:

   a. ability of members to influence good placements;

   b. the potential additional number of

acceptable work stations* which may be involved;

c. the level and nature of experience and training which could be provided by members of the organizations;

d. your access to persons responsible for inviting speakers;

e. the date of your last presentation before the group.

3. Develop a tentative speaking schedule which will permit you to follow up after each meeting. The time should not be too great between your talk and a meeting with an individual employer and between an employer's commitment and your ability to place an appropriate student.

4. Involve members of your advisory committee and prominent participating employers. Check out your analysis with them and get them to help you get appropriate invitations to present cooperative education.

5. Get invited to speak. If an influential, friendly person can get you invited, O.K. If that approach doesn't work, try the direct approach:

   a. Obtain the name and telephone number of the person responsible for inviting speakers. This may be the executive director, president, or chairperson of the program committee.

---

*"Work stations" and "training stations" are used interchangably in this manual.

b. Write a note explaining who you are, why you want to speak, and why you believe it will interest the organization's members, and state that you will call to discuss appearing on a program.

c. Follow up with a telephone call in two or three days. In your call, briefly repeat the contents of your note. Respond to both direct and implied questions. If you have prepared yourself, as recommended in the Introduction, you shouldn't have any problem getting your message across.

6. Prior to the meeting learn as much as you can about the interests and views of the members. Attempt to identify influential decision makers among them. Give them greater attention in your presentation and response to questions.

7. Make an effective presentation. Again, the preparation described in the Introduction will be helpful. While visual aids can make a presentation more interesting and effective, they are not essential. Some state departments of education supply useful handouts, visual aids and other materials. Some Local Education Agencies prepare their own slides, charts and film strips. It is better not to use any visuals than to use poor ones. Test any you intend using with your advisory committee. Members may help you get better ones. Emphasize community service, enlightened employer self-interest, and reciprocal relationships. Some points to note are that cooperative education:

- increases the pool of skilled workers in the community,
- provides willing, part-time workers, anxious to learn and take responsibility,
- gives employers insight into the competence of high school graduates,
- brings employers into the educational process and gives them an important role in preparing students for work,
- develops good relationships between business and young people and their parents,
- reinforces the image of business concerned with social and economic conditions of the community,
- reduces the time and cost of training new workers when cooperative education students are hired for regular employment,
- introduces an effective avenue for business to influence educational policy and curriculum generally,
- improves employers' ability to recruit competent, qualified minority and economically disadvantaged young workers,
- reduces the number of school dropouts and public and employer costs for remediation and special training,
- gives employers an opportunity to evaluate potential regular employees and their competence in the actual work station,
- provides support services, such as remediation, by the teacher/coordinator and other

special personnel to meet specific employer-identified needs and to solve any problems which arise on the job,

- is based on actual employers' needs rather than general theory.

The quid pro quo -- what cooperative education requires from the employer -- should not be played down. It should be presented clearly but not forbiddingly. Points to include are:

- the joint training agreement and training plan,
- periodic meetings between supervisor and teacher/coordinator and special contacts when needed to resolve difficulties,
- provision of appropriate, adequate experience and on-the-job training,
- good, trained supervision,
- a good working environment,
- role models who will demonstrate good work behavior,
- a safe work place,
- consideration for regular employment.

Anecdotal material which illustrates the benefits should be part of every presentation. This includes experiences of specific companies, student successes, and how employer participation has changed education.

8. Don't take up all the time by talking at your audience. Invite questions at the end. It is rare that questions are not asked. However, it may be necessary to encourage participants' involvement. Have a dozen or so typical questions available. If there is a long pause with no one saying a word, say, "Well, let me start the question period with one or two questions commonly asked about cooperative education," and go on to ask and answer your own questions.

9. Give out material at the meeting which describes and answers questions about cooperative education, contains your address, telephone number, and office hours and has a form which interested persons can mail to you with comments about the presentation, requests for more information and suggestions for improving and extending cooperative education.

10. Follow up all leads and expressions of interest with a telephone call to set up an appointment for a visit.

The following are some sample general paragraphs which can be incorporated in your presentation*.

1. Thank you for inviting me to present cooperative education to you. I am sure that you will find the cooperative education facts of interest and the program worth supporting.

---

*We have not included any anecdotes or jokes which should be used to lighten the presentation. Be sure to use ones which will not offend anyone in the audience.

2. Cooperative education is an important educational process for preparing secondary school students for full-time employment upon graduation and providing businesses with competent, productive workers. Students are placed in work stations which use vocational skills they have learned in school. Thus, students in an automotive repair program are placed with automobile dealers, garages, and gas stations. Clerical and secretarial students are placed in offices. The usual arrangement is for students to go to school for a half day and to work for a half day. (If possible, you might add: We are flexible and can make reasonable adjustments to meet business needs).

3. We have students being prepared in a large number of occupational areas. Included among these are: health, trade, clerical, industry and marketing, and distributive occupations.

4. Secondary cooperative education has a 75-year record of producing good results for business and high school students. Nationally, there are over 600,000 cooperative education students employed in over 200,000 businesses. Almost half are offered full-time employment upon graduation. At our school, the record is _____.

5. The educational theory behind cooperative education is simple. It is based on the concept that we learn best by doing, that we can find out about competence and areas needing improvement by observing the student/learner perform and that by feedback and positive reinforcement, we can help young people acquire good

work habits and reach required skill levels.

6. The benefits for employers are clear and impressive. They include: (select from list on pages 11 and 12, and add your own). Let me read you some comments from local companies that support and participate in cooperative education: (gather these anew each year to keep them fresh and up-to-date).

7. The benefits for our young people -- our next generation of workers -- are:

   - on-the-job experience and training in the real world of work;
   - opportunities to work and socialize with adults and people from outside their own communities;
   - money -- students are paid at least minimum wage;
   - feelings of independence and self-reliance which come with the experience of performing a job for which an employer is willing to pay and which can lead to a better paying job;
   - motivation to continue to learn in school as they see the real connection between in-school learning and work requirements;
   - documented employability -- the employer's letter of recommendation certifying that the youth has demonstrated behavior and competence expected of a mature worker;

feelings of worth and greater self-confidence as they demonstrate to themselves the ability to make it in the adult world;

- education which links learning and performance;
- a basis for making better career decisions.

8. So far, I've described the benefits of cooperative education to you, the employers, and to our students. Are there any benefits to the educational system? First, let me say, the cost of good cooperative education is not less than the cost of traditional in-school education. While the requirements for space and equipment are less, costs for teacher/coordinators are greater than for classroom teachers for the same number of students. The teacher/coordinator has to spend considerable time: recruiting appropriate work stations; preparing and selecting students for placement; following up on students' performance and work experience; relating learning in school and at work; making arrangements and following up for any special education recommended by the employer or requested by the student; developing a training plan and training agreement with the employer; making arrangements for special recognition events; maintaining student organizations; and dozens of other tasks. Consequently, the ratio of students to teacher/coordinator must be less than for a full-time classroom program. Further, a longer work year is required than the normal ten-month year. The advantages to the school are:

a. The primary advantage is the knowledge that students have received a better preparation for the world of work and that their transition from school to work is eased.

b. Teacher/coodinators play an important role in linking business and education, a goal which everyone in both spheres recognizes as desirable.

c. Through opportunities to visit and observe the work place, teacher/coordinators are able to help vocational education keep current with new technology.

d. Education is better able to help the community increase its economic vitality by developing a competent labor pool.

e. Support for public vocational education is increased.

9. Employers often ask if it is difficult to become a work sponsor for cooperative ecucation and will it be necessary to fill out dozens of forms? The answer to both questions is "no." All that is needed are opportunities for our students to gain good experience and on-the-job training under competent supervision in appropriate vocational areas and to meet legal safety standards. Once we have come to an agreement on the nature and progression of tasks to be performed and the conditions of employment, the only paper work is the student's performance evaluation. This can either be on your standard form or our form, whichever

is more appropriate.

10. Are there any additional possible benefits for employers? Yes. There are some possible in addition to those already noted. Targeted Job Tax Credit (TJTC) provides a financial benefit to the employer for employing economically disadvantaged cooperative education students. These students are as anxious to learn and as capable of performing the work they will be assigned as any workers anywhere. The government feels that it would be a greater social benefit to assist these students. Hence, the tax credit.

    The educational system is willing to provide training for your supervisors in orienting new employees and in conducting on-the-job training. The skills acquired will be useful for all supervision, not only for supervising our students.

    You can also serve on the Cooperative Education Advisory Committee and have a direct impact on the program.

11. If you want to learn more about cooperative education and how you can participate, call me,

        (Your name), at
        (Your phone and area code).

    I would welcome the opportunity to visit each of you and explore with each of you how you can participate and show you how participation could benefit your company.

12. I have distributed to each of you a questionnaire seeking your opinion and measure of interest for cooperative education. Even if you don't think that participation would be worthwhile for your company now, please fill it out and send it back to me. Your views will help us estimate community and business interests and needs and help us improve our planning for the future.

13. Thank you for listening to my presentation on cooperative education and giving so generously of your time. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions any of you may have.

The following is a sample of a postcard to be distributed to persons at a meeting at which you "present" cooperative education:

TO: John Smith, Cooperative Education Coordinator
Evergreen High School, Pine City

I am interested in learning more about the details of cooperative education and the benefits and costs to my company for participating in hiring students or in some other way. Please call me to set an appointment on: _____.

My comments on the presentation and cooperative education

_____

_____

_____

Print Name Here Your Title

_____

Company and Address Telephone No.

The reverse side of the postcard should contain your name and address so that all the respondent has to do is fill in the blanks and mail the card.

While there is a great deal of material in this section, it is not intended that you use all of it. A luncheon presentation should be limited to 15 minutes of talk and 15 minutes for questions and answers. Generally, never speak more than 30 minutes and allow as much time for questions as you take for your presentation.

Obtain a list with the names and affiliations of the persons who attend a meeting. This will not only provide leads but will permit you to refer to their attendance at your talk in any later communication you may have with them.

Your presentation of cooperative education, to be effective, must be smooth and professional. Even if you are a practiced public speaker, careful preparation is essential. Give yourself enought time to plan and practice the presentation. The text and illustrations should be tailored for each group. Learn the objectives and style of the group and the interests of the members and prepare your presentation accordingly. Modify the paragraphs suggested to fit your local story, your style and your audience.

Write your talk out, even if you are not going to read it. Go through it from start to finish at least once. Time it so that there will be time for questions. If you don't read your presentation, prepare a set of index cards containing the key points of your outline.

Test any visuals and handouts you are going to use to ensure that they add and do not detract from your presentation.

You've got a good product and one that is needed by the business community and students. Get that across!

## PRESENTING COOPERATIVE EDUCATION TO INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYERS

The objectives of the individual meetings are:

1. To obtain appropriate work stations for your students and a commitment from the employer to actively participate.

2. To coordinate with educational efforts to help students develop marketable work behavior and skills that will assist them to make a successful transition from school to work.

3. To gain the employer's participation in cooperative education and support for the approach whether or not objective "1" is achieved. (Sometimes employers, unable to make an immediate commitment for a work station, may be willing to serve on the advisory committee, donate equipment, or teach a class.)

4. If these objectives are not achieved, don't give up. Try to get an expression of interest and agreement for a future meeting to review possibilities and interests for later participation and support.

Once you have identified a company as a desirable prospect, it is essential to develop plans and strategies for achieving the objectives. There are four phases to the process, each of which has a number of activities. These phases are:

1. Obtaining an appointment to meet and

discuss cooperative education with the proper person in the company.

2. Preparing for the meeting.

3. The meeting -- presenting cooperative education.

4. Follow up.

Phase 1: Obtaining an Appointment

The person who must be convinced to participate in the program is the person who makes the hiring decision. Consequently, it is most desirable to meet with that person as soon as possible. Use your contacts in the business and education worlds to identify the proper person. Ask members of your advisory committee, participating employers, staff members of business and trade associations, school administrators and vocational education teachers.

If this approach fails, make the highest level person in the company your target. This may be the owner of a small company, the chief executive officer of a larger company, or the manager of a local branch of a national or statewide company. Even if the person is several levels above the actual decision maker, a refusal frequently includes a referal to the proper person. An expression of interest by a superior will always influence a person lower in the business hierarchy.

Having identified the person you want to meet, the next step is to get an appointment. Of course there are few problems if you know the person, have an introduction from another person, or the person has asked to meet with you as a result of your presentation before a business group, or a general publicity release. If you are making the first approach, call or write for a meeting.

If you decide to call, identify yourself (as the cooperative education coordinator) and specify the reason for

your call (to discuss the company's participation in cooperative education). If you decide to write, your letter should:

1. state why you are writing (to ask for a meeting to discuss cooperative education).

2. if the executive attended a meeting at which you made a presentation, say, "I wish to follow up on the program I described at the meeting of the X association which Z attended and expressed an interest in."

If you decide to telephone:

1. telephone after the secretary has gone home; the executive may answer the call.

2. don't take "X is busy" for an answer. Find out when you can call back.

3. don't hang up if told "X is busy on another line," wait it out.

Don't give a secretary who asks for details a brush-off. Give your best sales pitch. Treat the secretary as you would treat the executive. If convinced, the secretary may open the door and help you sell cooperative education to the boss.

Phase 2: Preparing for the Meeting

Preparation should start before you get the appointment and continue through the time you walk into the executive's office.

Before seeking an appointment you must know:

1. something about the company and why

you think that it could provide an effective learning experience;

2. something about the person you want to meet -- role in company, interest in education and community affairs, etc. You should have some idea of the person's receptivity and the kind of arguments which might be persuasive.

In addition, you should be prepared with the following:

1. the educational theory and research supporting cooperative education;

2. benefits for the employers as demonstrated by the experiences of specific employers in the community who have participated. If possible, these should have the same types of work stations;

3. the criteria a work station must meet;

4. how an employer can increase the value of a cooperative education placement for all concerned;

5. what the school system will do and how far it is prepared to go to meet employer's needs;

6. your role vis-a-vis the employer;

7. descriptions of the students who you are trying to place: their educational backgrounds and their vocational preparation;

8. explanations of the training agreement and training plan; and

9. the answers to questions usually posed by employers.

After you have obtained an appointment, the preparation consists of getting more detailed information about the policies and operations of the company and the role, status, and views of the individual with whom you are to meet. You should then sharpen and refine the information in the areas listed above to focus on the specific company and executive and to plan the interview. The more you know about the company and the individual you will meet the better you will be able to tailor your presentation and the more effective it will be.

Your plans for a model interview cannot be rigid. The plan's greatest use is to provide a base from which to make your presentation, explore the feasibility of the company participating, and lead up to a commitment. In the actual interview you must be prepared to shift the order of your presentation in line with the questions and comments from the person with whom you are meeting, keeping in mind that the objective is to get a commitment to participate.

Information about the industry and the specific company was obviously necessary for you to determine that this company could provide desirable work stations. You should have more detailed and specific information when you meet with the company executive. Before getting the appointment, you needed to know how to get the executive to meet with you. Now you need to know:

- the needs of the company which have to be met,
- the nature of the special efforts and arrangements the company would have to make with respect to safety, supervision, etc.,
- the kind of support and flexibility the company would require of the school system,
- which students should be placed with the company,
- whether anyone in the company or industry has expressed an opinion about the qualifications of high school graduates for full-time employment,

- whether the executive is the decision maker or another gatekeeper,
- the approach which would be most effective with this executive.

The chart on the following page indicates an objective for each of the nine areas listed on page 24 and the type of information needed to help focus on the specific company.

| PURPOSE | TYPE OF INFORMATION |
|---|---|
| 1. demonstrate applicability of educational theory supporting cooperative education. | 1. company's experience with cooperative education and complaints about competence of high school graduates. |
| 2. show how cooperative education can succeed and benefit the company -- work station criteria. | 2. research findings demonstrating value of coop-ed and the names of companies and individuals who can be contacted for information. |
| 3. illustrate what is expected from the company-- i.e. work station criteria. | 3. specific criteria company has to meet to be accepted as a work station. |
| 4. indicate how the employer can contribute to the vocational preparation of students. | 4. the kinds of tasks and responsibilities that could be assigned, the company's record for good supervision and training. |
| 5. demonstrate the level of support and flexibility the educational system is prepared to deliver. | 5. specific examples of how the system can make changes and provide services to meet this employer's needs. |
| 6. clarify how the teacher/coordinator will provide support to the employer and oversight to insure that company and students benefit from the experience. | 6. based on analysis of employer's activities, determine support and oversight needed and how teacher/coordinator would fit in. |
| 7. show how specific students would help employer and how experience would benefit specific students. | 7. employer's need for entry-level employees and students' need for competence levels, career goals, etc. and their need for real employment experiences. |
| 8. indicate how training agreement and plan simplifies carrying out the responsibilities of students and employer, and school. | 8. details of agreement and plan, e.g., time, attendance, pay, hours, benefits, work rules, progression, and rotation. |
| 9. be able to provide satisfactory answers to questions. | 9. answers to problems an employer would anticipate, e.g., safety, accident insurance and union reaction. |

Review the benefits companies get from participation and determine which apply to this company. Some that you should consider, in addition to those listed in other sections of the manual, are:

- it may be possible to reassign skilled, regular workers to more difficult and demanding jobs;
- it gives the employer as much as ten months to determine whether or not to hire the young worker full time;
- the student's in-school education can be tailored to the job tasks;
- there is no commitment to continue employment;
- participation demonstrates a willingness to employ students from economically disadvantaged families;
- the teacher/coordinator can arrange for supervisory training without cost to the company; and
- the teacher/coordinator is always available to help resolve any problems which may arise and to provide advice and support in training the young worker to acquire appropriate work behavior and skills.

Review the information that you have in order to identify any requirements that the employer may not meet and where the information you have is insufficient. The purpose is to determine in advance how to help the employer meet requirements and to prepare questions to obtain the information you need. Some criteria that employers have to meet in most cooperative education programs are:

- compliance with state and federal

child labor, safety, health, and other relevant laws;

willingness to abide by a written training agreement and training plan;

ability to provide good opportunities for learning good work behavior and using and increasing skills in the occupation of choice;

capability to provide competent, reasonable supervision;

willingness to complete performance evaluation reports and meet with you to discuss the student's progress;

commitment not to use cooperative education students to replace regular employees.

Phase 3: The Meeting -- Presenting Cooperative Education

The way you handle yourself during the meeting may be crucial in determining the success of your mission. Your knowledge about the company and the individual with whom you are meeting should give you clues on how to conduct yourself.

Make your presentation short and to the point. These two objectives can only be accomplished if you write out your presentation, hone it to a fine point, and then more or less memorize it by practicing it two or three times. It is quite permissible to use an index card with a checklist or key points to insure that you don't overlook anything of importance. Try to be as informed as possible. Encourage the executive to ask questions at any point.

Keep the meeting short and be alert to any signs of impatience. However, you can't reach your objectives by withdrawing. You must be persuasive -- that you are

presenting a proposal for partnership which will be beneficial to all concerned. You must come across as a knowledgable professional, enthusiastic and committed to secondary cooperative education.

Do not prolong the meeting just to get your points across if the employer agrees to conditions for participation. Arrange a time to get additional information you need for reviewing the training agreement, etc.

The meeting itself has six steps:

1. "Introduction and lead-in" is a time for exchanging pleasantries, breaking the ice, defining why the meeting is taking place, and establishing your credentials. It also is the time to find out whether or not the person you are meeting with can decide for the company and how much is known about cooperative education.

2. "Presenting cooperative education" is the time for telling the cooperative education story. The details will vary with what the person you talk to knows about cooperative education. Focus on employers' needs.

3. "Give and take" is an exchange of questions and answers. The executive will have questions about cooperative education and the relationship between school and company. You will have questions about the ability of the company to provide an appropriate work station and the will of the company to cooperate with you to make the student's work experience a worthwhile learning experience.

   Key questions for you to ask are: "Are you completely satisfied with the ability of high school students?" "Why?" If the answer is negative, your response should demonstrate how, through cooperative education, dissatisfaction can change to satisfaction.

4. "Your decision" is the point in the meeting at which you decide whether or not the company could provide a desirable work station. If "yes," try to get a commitment. If "no," what kind of company participation would be of value to your school.

5. "Getting agreement" is when you attempt to get a commitment from the employer to provide a work station.

6. "Concluding" step is the time to review the agreement, make arrangements for the next steps, and exchange pleasantries prior to leaving.

Step 1: "Introduction and lead-in" should not be prolonged as the executive may have only limited time. If someone made the appointment for you or if the appointment resulted from your presentation to a group, reference to either of these is appropriate. Your description of your credentials should include any business as well as educational experience to indicate your knowledge of business needs and interest and enthusiasm for cooperative education. After you describe your role, it would be appropriate to ask, "How would you be involved in the decision to participate in cooperative education and what whould your role be in any program?" Sometimes the executive may want to engage in small talk -- the weather, the local ball team, etc. If this is the case, make the most of it to develop rapport and an amiable relationship.

Make your objective clear. It is for the two of you to explore whether participation by the company in cooperative education is feasible, the type of participation which would be most beneficial, and whatever preliminary arrangements need to be made.

Step 2: "Presenting cooperative education" should be kept within the time allowed to sell the business executive.

Thus, how much the person knows and how he or she feels about cooperative education are key factors. It is desirable, if you can manage it, to elicit questions so that you are not forced to deliver a monologue. Illustrate and interlace your description with anecodotal materials, references to the experiences of other employers, follow-up on student performance, etc. In short, present cooperative education as a practical, beneficial, productive, exciting enterprise for all concerned rather than as dry educational theory and technology.

Your presentation of cooperative education should be brief, concrete, well organized and tailored to interest this employer and this person -- not overlooking the conditions for accepting a work station. Objectives are to develop and increase interest in participation. Some key points are:

- partnership between education and employers to provide employers with workers and high school students with jobs they need and want,
- advantages of learning by doing and evaluation by observation rather than by credentials,
- time arrangements -- alternatives,
- relating school learning and on-the-job training,
- benefits to employers.

In general this step should include:

- what cooperative education is -- how it is distinguished from other vocational education,
- why favor cooperative education over in-school learning or work study,

- who is involved in making cooperative education effective and their respective roles and interrelationships,
- what benefits are for employer, students, educational system, and community,
- requirements for accepting a work station.

If you have knowledge of a problem the employer faces, which could be solved by participation, make sure you point out how.

Don't take more than 10 minutes for your presentation. Again, it is important to get the employer involved in the presentation.

Step 3: "Give and take" should build on your presentation both for questions from the executive and questions you want answered about the company. You want to find out as much as you can about the company and the views of the executive to help you decide what tack to take and whether or not to encourage participation. Try to learn something about the company's experiences with employing high school graduates, both good and bad; how the executive feels about the adequacy of high school education; and how the company can best benefit from cooperative education. The information will give you clues on the specific students to place, and help identify possible problems for employer, school, or student.

Don't interrupt an employer who goes beyond your questions to provide information about the company. "Good listening" doesn't simply mean "don't interrupt," it means listen and make mental notes about every bit of information which indicates the desirability of work stations in this company, the kind of support which may be required, the types of students who could be placed, other areas in which the company or individual could profitably participate, etc.

You can move into this step by questions such as:

"I know very little about your company.

"Can you tell me something about how you operate and the kind and level of skills you require?"

"Can students graduating from high school meet your needs?" "Why?"

"Have you ever thought about suggesting changes in the way schools prepare young people for work?"

Sometimes you will have to ask questions to get the specific information to determine whether or not this company could provide satisfactory work stations. However, don't monopolize the conversation without giving the employer the opportunity to ask questions. If no questions are forthcoming, you ask the questions. Some examples:

"Some employers are very concerned about safety and Worker's Compensation laws. Let me tell you that these do not pose a serious problem."

"An employer asked me what he could do if the student was not responsive and did not show any aptitude. In cases such as this, our approach is....."

Try to identify and define all serious employer problems and objectives, don't ignore them. Deal with them in a straightforward, concrete manner.

In "give and take," focus on asking and answering questions which will provide you with the information that you need to make the decision in the next step, provide you with the arguments which will convince the employer of the desirability of participating, and condition the employer to accept your analysis and decision. The final point here is that sometimes one asks a question not to get an answer, but to condition the other person to accept or disregard a particular point of view.

Your questions must not be of the "cross examination" type, but tactful, open and diplomatic and your answers should be to the point and not defensive. This means that you have to prepare in advance questions to ask and answers for questions which might be asked. While there are a large number of questions which most employers ask, the most important ones to consider are those this employer might ask. To identify and prepare for these, role play the employer. Ask yourself, "What is the situation and what must be clarified from this employer's point of view to gain agreement?" With a little practice and some knowledge of the employer, you will be able to anticipate and prepare for most questions.

Step 4: "Your decision" can be any one of five alternatives:

a. This is a desirable work station -- get a commitment.

b. This is not a desirable work station now but could become one if I work on it.

c. This is not a desirable work station and I don't see how I could help it become one. The company (or the individual) could be involved in some other kind of participation.

d. There is nothing we could gain by continuing relationships with this organization.

e. I don't have enough information or enough time to make a decision.

You must come to your decision during step 3, the "give and take." It will put considerable pressure on you to carry out this analysis while at the same you are attentive to the questions asked of you and the answers being given to your questions. Nevertheless, it must be done.

A necessary condition to accomplish this is that you are very clear in your mind about the conditions which must exist for coming to decisions "a," "b," "c," or "d." Decision "e" simply means you didn't have enough time to come to any of the other four decisions.

If you come to decision "a," "b," or "c" the next point is, have you been meeting with the person who can commit the company to participate? This will tell you how to proceed to the next step.

Step 5: "Getting agreement." If you arrive at decision "a," you want a commitment for a job. If the person you are speaking to is the one who can commit the company and there is not immediate agreement, you must be diplomatically persistent. Patiently try to get the specific barriers defined. With the other person's help show how they can be overcome. If desirable, review the benefits, add any additional ones which are appropriate. Expand on the flexibility to meet the employer's work conditions. Do not give up. When you have obtained agreement to participate, return to the conditions which must be met and the completion of the training agreement. This should be approached as an understanding between partners rather than as a contract in which each party has a legal obligation. Provide any explanation and assistance necessary to make the agreement acceptable and completion of the forms easy. It may be necessary to return to get the signed agreement. This is not necessarily a disadvantage as it would provide for another interview in which relationships could be cemented and other matters, such as the training plan, discussed.

If the person is not authorized to commit the company, you should work for a joint presentation to the person who can, with a favorable recommendation by the person with whom you are meeting.

It is not possible to do anything about an unexplained, "No, we cannot provide employment for a cooperative education student." Try to identify and deal, together with the executive, with the specific problems and barriers which tend to inhibit participation as a work sponsor.

Of course you should be prepared in advance for the most common problems and barriers. Among these are:

- poor economic conditions, "our own workers have been laid off,"
- jobs call for higher skills than students have,
- safety conditions can't be met,
- students don't have basic reading and math skills,
- employing students is not permitted by worker's compensation insurance,
- there would be union opposition,
- supervisors not equipped to supervise and train students,
- participation would involve too much paperwork,
- the school's time schedule doesn't fit company needs,
- floating, ill-defined concerns over pilferage, child labor laws, training requirements, etc.

If despite your strongest efforts, the person is still not convinced that sponsoring a cooperative education student is in the enlightened self-interest of the company, or if you are not sure that the company would provide appropriate work stations, you have three alternatives:

a) to try to involve the company and the individual in an aspect of cooperative education other than providing a work station, e.g.,

membership on the advisory committee, providing needed resources, speaking at a "related instruction" session, and reviewing and evaluating programs;

b. to set up a date for a second meeting at which you will try to have answers to problems presented and suggestions for alternatives to overcome barriers to participation. When you reach an impasse, you might say, "The problems and barriers seem difficult, but with a little time and the opportunity to talk to some of my colleagues, I think that I can come up with answers that will satisfy you. Can we set up a meeting for next week? And, if I feel that we can't meet your needs, I'll call in advance;"

c. to give up on this company at this time. If you have developed good relationships and still believe that the company could provide good work stations, keep the door open. You might say, "O.K., you know the situation, I don't. However, if you change your mind, or need help in any way, please call me. Here's one of my cards. Also, I'll get in touch with you in six months or so to let you know if we have made any changes and to find out if your situation has changed."

If you are the one who wants to back out, the situation is more sensitive. You may point out the specific problem areas, e.g., "The job described will not give the specific student an opportunity to use or increase his vocational skills, and I don't see how tasks could be enriched to

make them relevant." Or, you may want to generalize. "This would be a good work-study job but as a cooperative education job, we don't have any student who would benefit educationally." "Let me go back and review the qualifications and interests of the students who have been admitted to cooperative education." "There are problems involving the child labor laws; I don't want to take any risks for either you or the student. I'll review the situation and get back to you."

Step 6: "Concluding" the meeting. You should:

confirm commitments and arrangements,

tie down all loose ends,

thank the executive for the meeting time.

If there has been agreement to employ a cooperative education student, ask for the specific information you need, e.g., job description, the date students can be interviewed, when they start work, a time to review and sign the training agreement, the names of the supervisors and the person who will serve as liaison, etc.

If the decision has been not to employ a student but for the company or individual to participate in some other way, nail that down with the same kind of review of actions to be taken, by whom, by what date, etc.

If your decision has been not to set up a relationship at this time, it is best to keep the situation loose. Stay with "I'll get in touch with you or if you think of something please get in touch with me."

Finally, no matter what the outcome, thank the person for giving of his or her time.

Phase 4 -- Follow Up

To "follow up" after the meeting, it is necessary to:

record the details of the meeting -- with whom you met; why; what the outcome was; what was done well; what could have been done better; the commitments that were made; who is going to do what, when, etc.; what should be done next year, or whenever you believe the next move should be made.

write to the person with whom you met to thank him or her for a pleasant, productive meeting, confirm the agreements which were reached, provide information on the follow-up steps you are taking, and express any expectations or wishes for future relationships.

start carrying out your commitments.

plan to evaluate and improve the work station to make it better serve the objectives of cooperative education.

maintain a reference record on the company. A 5" x 8" card file system is usually sufficient. Cards should contain information such as company name and address, the names, positions, and telephone numbers of the persons with whom contacts have been made and the nature of the contact, the nature of the business and the kinds of occupations involved, the nature of work stations provided and their quality, the results of placing students, dates and nature of continuing contacts and persons involved, and any characteristics and facts which would be important for you to know. Do not trust this information to your memory alone.

## ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. The National Commission for Cooperative Education puts out two publications which may be useful:

> A booklet, "Cooperative Education Employers in the United States and Canada," lists names of companies sponsoring cooperative education with two and four year colleges. The list contains names of 19,440 employers and 215 colleges.
>
> A booklet, "A Coordinator's Guide to Selling Cooperative Education," is a counterpart to this guide.
>
> The address of the Commission is 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts, 02115

2. R.C. Rist, Earning and Living, Sage Library of Social Research, 1981. Chapter 4, "Strategy Two: Expanded Private Sector Employment," describes several youth employment programs and efforts to establish community linkages and to identify and recruit employers.

3. Ellen J. Winer, A Basic Manual for Inplementing Work Experience Programs, The Center for Secondary School Work Experience Education. This manual is an on-target "How To" guide which, in Dr. Winer's words, contains "Some of the things you always wanted to know about cooperative education but didn't know how to ask."

GO TO IT -- GOOD LUCK!!